

Message Text

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ACTION IO-13

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 EUR-12 ISO-00 ARA-06 EA-07 NEA-10 L-03

SP-02 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01

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AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN 2135

NAIROBI FOR MYERSON

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EGEN, UN, ECOSOC

SUBJECT: 60TH ECOSOC: ELECTIONS: IMPLICATIONS OF FRENCH
LOSS OF SEAT ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

REF: USUN 2096

1. AS REPORTED REFTTEL, WEO GROUP WAS UNABLE TO AGREE
ON A SLATE OF CANDIDATES FOR ELECTION TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMISSION AND THUS PRESENTED THE CANDIDATURES OF AUSTRIA,
FRANCE, AND SWEDEN FOR THE TWO SLOTS AVAILABLE. IN THE
RESULTING BALLOTING, AUSTRIA AND SWEDEN WERE ELECTED. THIS
REPRESENTS THE FIRST TIME IN OUR RECOLLECTION THAT A PER-
MANENT MEMBER OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL HAS BEEN DENIED A
POSITION WHICH IT SOUGHT ON AN ECOSOC OR OTHER STANDING BODY.

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THE FRENCH ARE PARTICULARLY UPSET, SINCE THEY CONSIDER THEMSELVES

TO BE ONE OF THE MAJOR SUPPORTERS OF HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVITIES IN THE UNITED NATIONS. (THEY ALSO ANTICIPATE A SIGNIFICANT PUBLIC REACTION IN FRANCE.) FRENCH PARTICULARLY FURIOUS WITH AUSTRIANS WHOM THEY CLAIM WAGED ESPECIALLY DIRTY CAMPAIGN WHICH INCLUDED SPREADING TALES ABOUT PRO-ISRAELI VIEWS OF FRENCH CANDIDATE AND REMARKS ABOUT IT BEING TIME TO END AUTOMATIC RIGHTS OF PERMANENT MEMBERS.

2. ELECTION TO INTERNATIONAL NARCOTIC CONTROL BOARD (INCB) IS OF A SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT ORDER, SINCE TECHNICALLY IT BASED ON PERSONAL EXPERTISE OF THE CANDIDATES. NEVERTHELESS, SOVIETS WERE INCENSED WHEN THEIR CANDIDATE FAILED THE FIRST ROUND OF BALLOTING ON NATIONAL CANDIDATES AND INFORMALLY EXPRESSED SERIOUS CONCERN THAT "PRINCIPLE" THAT PERMANENT MEMBERS SHOULD BE ELECTED TO UN BODIES BEING ERODED. SOVIET CANDIDATE FOR INCB WAS ELECTED ON SECOND ROUND BALLOTING, FRENCH CANDIDATE ELECTED ON THE THIRD ROUND, BUT UK CANDIDATE FAILED TO BE ELECTED.

3. IN EVENT FRENCH, BRITISH OF SOVIETS SHOULD ASK, THE US SUPPORTED THE PERMANENT MEMBER CANDIDATES. SOVIETS, WHO APPEAR TO SHARE OUR CONCERN AT WHAT HAPPENED, ASSURE US THEY VOTED FOR FRANCH CANDIDATE.

4. THERE IS NO LEGISLATIVE BASIS ESTABLISHING THE RIGHT OF PERMANENT MEMBERS OF SECURITY COUNCIL TO POSITIONS ON THE VARIOUS UN BODIES. RATHER, IT IS A "GENTLEMEN'S AGREEMENT" WHICH HAS WORKED IN THE PAST, NAMELY THROUGH ENDORSEMENT OF PERMANENT MEMBER CANDIDATES IN THE REGIONAL GROUPS WHICH NORMALLY SUFFICES AND, IN ABSENCE OF GROUP ENDORSEMENT, BY WIDESPREAD ACCEPTANCE OF GENTLEMEN'S AGREEMENT THAT PERMANENT MEMBER SHOULD BE ELECTED TO UN BODIES. THE WEAK POINTS OF THIS SYSTEM, AS DEMONSTRATED IN THESE RECENT ELECTIONS, ARE WHEN REGIONAL GROUP IS UNABLE TO AGREE ON A SLATE (AND THE CHOICE AMONG COMPETING CANDIDATES IS REACHED BY THE COUNCIL OR ASSEMBLY AS A WHOLE) OR IN ELECTIONS WHICH ARE BY SECRET BALLOT AND NOT BASED ON REGIONAL CHOICES (E.G. INCB). RISK TO PERMANENT MEMBER ALL THE GREATER WHERE THERE ARE PARTICULAR TEMPTATIONS FOR VOTERS TO OPT AWAY FROM A PERMANENT MEMBER SUCH AS CANDIDACY OF TWO "NEUTRALS" OR POSSIBLE PASSING PIQUE AT A CONFIDENTIAL

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PARTICULAR PERMANENT MEMBER OR PARTICULAR CANDIDATE.

5. SEVERAL REASONS CAN BE CITED FOR THE FRENCH SETBACK -- ALMOST TOTAL ABSENCE OF LOBBYING IN CONTRAST TO THE VIGOROUS CAMPAIGNS IN CAPITALS AND IN THE UN WAGED BY SWEDEN AND AUSTRIA, AN ALLEGED PRO-ISRAELI BIAS OF THE FRENCH REPRESENTATIVE TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (JOUVIGNY), REPORETED ALGERIAN FURY AT WHAT THEY PERCEIVED AS DECISIVE FRENCH PRESSURE ON IVORY

COAST NOT TO YIELD TO ALGERIAN DEMANDS TO TOUGHEN ZIONISM
ASPECTS OF RESOLUTION ON DECADE TO COMBAT RACIAL DISCRIMINATION,
ETC. IT MAY WELL THUS HAVE BEEN A ONE-TIME FREAK INCIDENT.
BUT THE DEPARTMENT SHOULD BE AWARE OF A BASIC GROWING
DISENCHANTMENT IN THE UN(INCLUDING ELEMENTS OF WEO GROUP)
WITH THE PRIVILEGED POSITION OF PERMANENT MEMBERS STEMING FROM
VARIETY OF FACTORS.AS NOW EVIDENCED IN THIS FRENCH EXAMPLE,
ANY COUNTRY CAN BLOCK THE AGREEMENT ON A REGIONAL SLATE (I.E.
INSISTING ON ITS CANDIDACY) AND FORCE A SECRET BALLOT IN
ECOSOC IN HOPES OF UNSEATING A PERMANENT MEMBER. THE SERIOUS
IMPLICATIONS OF THIS FOR THE US POSITION ARE EVIDENT THOUGH
WE, SOVIETS AND CHINESE MAY BE SOMEWHAT LESS VULNERABLE THAN
BRITISH AND FRENCH. POTENTIAL SERIOUSNESS HEIGHTENED BY
FACT ALL IN UN NOW AWARE OF SIGNIFICANCE OF WHAT HAPPENED.
NY POST EVEN CARRIED SMALL ARTICLE NOTING UNPRECEDENTED
NATURE OF DEVELOPMENT.

6. AT SUGGESTION UK MISSION WE WILL BE MEETING WITH FRENCH
AND UK MISOFFS TO DISCUSS SYSTEM WIDE IMPLICATIONS OF HUMAN
RIGHTS ELECTIONS AND WHAT IF ANY STEPS WE SHOULD TAKE TO
TRY AVOID ANY REPETITION.
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